Project I.D. No. 20

NAME: Nakashima, Masakazu DATE OF BIRTH: 1895 PLACE OF BIRTH: Kagawa-ken
Age: 80 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: High school

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1913 Age: 18 M.S. Y.Y. Port of entry: Seattle
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer's son 2. Rancher 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Fresno 2. Caruthers 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Fresno
Name of relocation center: Jerome, Arkansas
Dispensation of property: Leased land to American Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. Carpenter 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: Gila, Arizona

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: Fall, 1945
Address/es: 1. Mammoth, Ca. 2. Caruthers
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 5/6/75 Place: Caruthers, Ca.
translator: Mabel Hall

T: First of all tell me your name please.

N: It is Nakashima Masakazu. I was born in Shikoku.

Q: When were you born?

A: In 1895. I was 80 years old on March 16.

Q: What kind of a family did you come from?

A: It used to be in lumber business, but after the main person died it was difficult to stock goods, so we sold hardwares and drugs. We also had flour mill, and manufactured noodles by hiring people.

Q: Was your father a good businessman?

A: My father operated a 3rd class post office for about 20 years.

Q: Was your father adopted?

A: Yes, he was adopted into a relation's family. While he was working at the post office he read magazines and found out that it would be interesting to start a business abroad, so he decided to come to America. He came to America in 1892.

Q: At that time how many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had 2 brothers and 4 sisters. There were altgether 7 children. My father was adopted into the family which was in lumber business and married their daughter. As he had no experience in lumber business, he operated a post office.

Q: What do you remember about your father?

A: My father graduated from the first high school that was built in that district. In later years high schools taught many subjects, but in those days mathematics and Chinese literature were the only subjects taught in high schools. That is why they learned advanced Chinese literature in high schools in those days. After I came here I used to ask my father how to write some Chinese characters when I wrote letters, because it was faster to ask him than to look up in dictionaries.

Q: Was your father a strict man or a gentle man?

A: He was very gentle. He was the first one to come to America from his family. Then he sent for his brother and three people from his wife's family. He also went back to Japan and found wives for those four people.

Q: When your father came here, was his family still in Japan?

A: Yes, they were all in Japan. I will show you a picture of my father. He was an intellectual in those days. This is the first letter he wrote to his wife and children from America. On the 25th anniversary of his death my wife had this letter published in a newspaper as his memorial. We thought it might bring back memories ~~of~~ for some old and lonely Isseis.

Q: How many years did your father live in America?

A: For about 55 years. He came here in 1903, and went back to Japan only once.

Q: When did you come here?

A: I came here in 1914.

Q: What do you remember about your mother?

A: She was a very kind-hearted person. When she was young her family was well-to-do, so they had tutors come to the house to teach her samisen. Her family made so much money in lumber business that her great grandfather had a reserve seat in the theater, and [illegible] ordered food to be delivered to the theater. He also owned much land. When this great grandfather died his second son became an heir, and the oldest son established a branch family. The reason why the oldest son did not become an heir was that he was a scholar of Chinese literature and did not have any interest in business, so if he became an heir they might lose the fortune. The younger brother felt sorry for his older brother, and opened a wine store for him so that he can make a living. But the older brother did not have any interest in business and let the servants take care of the store, so the servants pocketed the money and he lost all the money. For two years after that the younger brother bought rice for him to make wine. Since then the family became poor.

Q: Was he your grandfather?

A: No, he was my mother's father.

Q: How much schooling did you have?

A: I came her right after I finished high school. My father started farming here with my uncle about 70 years ago when this area was not yet developed. I came here 62 years ago when I was 18.

Q: What was your father doing?

A: He was a farmer growing grape.

Q: Where was he farming?

A: About 5 miles noth of here, near Fresno.

Q: Where did you land?

A: I landed at Seattle in 1913, and came to Fresno by train. My father and uncle met me at the train depot in Fresno.

Q: When you took a ship from Japan ....

A: In those days there were no airplanes, just ships. I was coming to San Francisco, but they found out that I had hookworms at the Immigration Office in Kobe. I went to doctors in Hiroshima and other places to get rid of the hookworms, but it took a long time. Finally on December 14 I took a physical examination to come to Seattle. It was not as strict to come to Seattle as coming to San Francisco, so I passed the physical. In those days ships coming to San Francisco were about 12,000 tons, but for Seattle line ships of Nihon Yusen Company were used. Japan was not known too

well to other countries in those days, so 5,000 ton ships were about the largest Japan had. When we arrived at Vancouver it was the New Years Day, so we had zoni on board the ship. It took a long time to go from Vancouver to Seattle.

Q: What kind of people were on board the ship?

A: I was young among the passengers. There were many picture brides and men who went back to Japan to take wives. There were about 300 passengers on board the ship which was about 5,000 tons.

Q: Did you talk to picture brides?

A: We all became friendly on the ship.

Q: What kind of things did you talk about? Were they worried?

A: They were not too worried. They were matched by relations or friends from the native town, and if they think they were suitable by looking at pictures they decided to marry. That is why when they come to Seattle or San Francisco they don't know their husbands, as they only seen their pictures.

Q: Were their marriages go on smoothly?

A: Yes, most of them went smoothly.

Q: Were there any cases where the picture and real person was different?

A: Yes, there were some such cases.

Q: What kind of story did you hear?

A: Once in a while there was such case as a bad man sending a photograph of his friend instead of his. When the bride came here and found out that the husband was not the one in the photograph the trouble started.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was before you came here?

A: I had general idal about America through my father's letter.

Q: Then you were not surprised when you came here, weren't you?

A: No, I wasn't.

Q: What was your first impression of Seattle?

A: The thing that impressed me most in Seattle was that some streets were made by burying Oregon pines about 6 feet long. I hear that concrete will crack when it is too cold, and gets slippery where it rains too much. As there were much lumber in Seattle the streets were made of Oregon pines. I thought big country as America is, it does thing in big scale. Then when I took a train from Seattle, I saw many tall trees over 200 feet tall standing in rows for miles in Oregon. We cannot see such a sight in Japan.

Q: Did your father have a house in Fresno?

A: Yes, he had a house with a living-room, bed-rooms and a kichen. My father and uncle owned a 100 acre as partners.

Q: Did they buy it?

A: They brought money from Japan and bought it. It may sound conceited but my father brought money from Japan and bought the land. 99% of Japanese here saved money by working and bought land.

Q: Could they buy land in those days?

A: Yes, they could. There was no land law in California yet. Mac Larty (mcclarchy) wrote in Sacramento Bee that Japanese are diligent people who work even on Sundays, so the Mongolian race might take over the sociey if the white people don't watch out. To make good news story it was best to criticize foreigners as it did not offend any Americans. That is why Japanese were used to make news stories. MacLarty attakced Jpanese on the paper, but he had Japanese gardeners and cooks as they were hard workers. Japanese were used in selling more papers. When the readers read the story they thought Japanese were bad people, and that is how the Japanese exclusion was started.

Q: How was the work of grwoing grapes? Was it hard?

A: I never worked in Japan, so I wondered why I came to such a place. I went to a white family and asked them to hire me as a schoolboy. They promised to hire me, but my father and uncle talked me out of it, In those days raisins were only $40 a ton. Of course everything was cheap in those days; bread was 8¢ a loaf, and ham and egg dish with as much bread as you want was 20¢. The grape were still young and did not have much crop. It was hard to manage a ranch, so if I left they would be shorthanded. That is why they talked me out. They let me go to a grammar school for 4 months, and after that I had to help the ranch.

My younger brother came from Japan about 1½ year later. As I was helping the ranch, he went to a grammar school for about 3 months. and then went to a high school in Caruthers. He was the first graduate of that high school.

Q: About what time did you start working in the morning?

A: I was young so I slept till somebody kicked me out of bed. Then I hardly had any time to eat before I started working. I think I started working around 7 o'clock.

Q: What time did you quit in the evening?

A: I worked till dark. If we worked from 7 in the morning to 6 in the evening it would be 10 hours, but we worked longer. For about a year after I came here I came to a wrong place as I was not used to the labor.

Q: What do you remember was hard?

A: Unlike Thompson seedless grapes, musket grapes were very low, so when I worked bending my back all day long, my back hurt as if it was pricked with pins. It was painful. Then my uncle told me to prune the branches he left. He had pruned all the branches on the top part, and I had to cup the ones in the lower part. I had to prune with my head down all day long, so my back hurt. If he was a kinder man he could have asked me if my back hurt, or told me to take a break, but as he was an Army lieutenant who fought in the Russo-Japanese War he had no consideration for me.

Q: Wasn't Fresno hot?

A: Yes, it was hot. I am used to the heat now. The houses have air-conditions now and it is easier to live, but in those days it was different. There were wide open spaces with dead grass as it was not irrigated. Nowadays the land is developed and green plants absorb the heat so it has become cooler. When I came here there were cases of malaria in Fresno, but as the land was developed and it became cooler, there isn't any more malaria in Fresno.

Q: Were you stricken with malaria?

A: No, I wasn't.

Q: Were many Japanese stricken with malaria?

A: Yes, many. Those patients shiver with chills when it is hot, then they get hot and they drip with sweat.

Q: How was the relationship with the white people in early days?
The relationship with the white people in the neighborhood was very smooth. The reason why Japanese exclusion started was because MacLarty (McLarty) wrote anti-Japanese articles in the paper. The fear and contempt for Japanese was started by reading the paper.

Q: How long did you help your father?

A: My father and uncle owned 100 acres and worked as partners for about 5 years. My uncle's wife was a graduate of the girls' higher normal school, and was teaching a girls' highschool in Kochi. At that time my father went back to Japan, picked her as my uncle's wife and brought her to America with him.

Q: Was your brother the only one who came to America from your family?

A: I was the oldest son, and my brother came here about 1½ year after I came here. I have another younger brother in Japan who has never been in America.

Q: Did your father return to Japan after a while?

A: He had 160 acres which he left with us two brothers and went back to Japan around 1924 with no intention of coming back to America. Then my wife died leaving twin babies, so he came back to America to help us, and he died here.

Q: When did you get married?

A: I got married around 1925. Mine was not a picture marriage. I went back to Japan to take a wife.

Q: Who acted as as a go-between?

A: My father did. I went back to Japan while my father was there, and he picked a wife for me. At the wedding the bride pays homage tp the family Buddhist shrine first, then takes her seat.

Side 2

Q: Is the groom's side already seated?

A: The parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts of both sides are already seated. In a wedding the go-betweens are the most important people, so they take the top seat.

Q: Which side facing the family shrine do they sit?

A: The family shrine can be in the living-room or in the Buddhsit room. If the family shrine is in the Buddhist room the bride pays homage in there first and then comes to the room where the ceremony is going to be held. The go-betweens sit on the top seat, then the brides family sit on the left side, and the groom's family on the right side.

Q: How long did you stay in Japan then?

A: I stayed there for about 7 months.

Q: Did your uncle take care of the ranch during that time?

A: My brother did.

Q: Was the ranch in your uncle's and your name?

A: My brother and I were managing the ranch together, but I was married and my brother was married, so we were separated before it became complicated. My brother bought land in Parlier and moved there. At that time big depression came and 29 banks in 4 counties in Central California (Fresno, Madera, Kings and Tulare) went bankrupt. In the meantime my wife died, and I could not hire people to take care of 160 acres, so I put the land in mortgage. Later I bought back half of it.

Q: Was the land in your uncle's and your name?

A: No, it was in my name this time.

Q: What happened to your uncle?

A: He moved to Parlier.

Q: Your wife died ...

A: My wife died at childbirth leaving two children, and I lived here alone for 33 years. My two sons went to Europe during the World War II. The oldest son went to Germany right before the war was over, so he stayed there as a member of the occupation force.

Q: How many years after you got married that your wife died?

A: Three years after we got married. For 33 years after that I farmed here alone.

Q: Was it at this house?

A: Yes. I lease the house to a white family while I was in the camp. About 5 years after I came back from the camp I built this house.

Q: Was it at the site?

A: Yes, it was.

Q: What other kind of hardship did you experience during the depression?

A: My parents came here, so I worked in the ranch and my parents took care of the children, cooked and washed clothes.

Q: Did your mother come here, too?

A: Yes, she did as my wife died.

Q: Did you manage 80 acres all by yourself?

A: When I was busy I hired people, but I managed mostly by myself.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you have in growing grape?

A: Growing grape is the best work among farming. We can sell grape to Sun Maid Company, so we do not have to worry about market. Nowadays everything is done by machine except watering.

Q: How was it during the depression?

A: Around 1925 and 1926 a pound of grape was only 1½¢. When I came here the wages of laborer was $1 a day, but it went up to $2.50 a day. The price of grape was about $40 a ton, 2¢ a pound when I came here. While the wages went up 2½ times, the price of grape went down to 1½¢ a pound. There was no work, and all the banks except Bank of America went bankrupt.

Q: Did you find it hard to make a living?

A: Yes, I did, but we managed to live. When my wife died my relations did not have condolence money, so they came and helped my ranch 4 or 5 days instead. I had a balance of $3 in a bank in Caruthers but I could not cash it, so I left it alone for three months. Even when I worked near my house I took lunch with me because if I come home I would read the paper and waste time.

Q: Did you do that so that you can work more.

A: Yes, to save time.

Q: Even though you worked you couldn't sell, raisins couldn't you?

A: I could sell them although they were cheap. At that time I also grew peach and apricot so I could make some money. When I made some money by selling apricot and write a check, it was endorsed by someone to pay a debt, and that person would in turn use it to pay a debt to another person. So one check was circulated from one person after another. People were in debt that much. Normally a days wage was $2.50, but there wasn't any work even for a dollar. Those who worked at the white families were better off because they were paid by the day, week or the month. On the other hand those who had business had the hardest time because their money came in once a year, and they had to make the living during the year.

Q: How badly off were some people? Were there any who became beggers?

A: No, there weren't such people. When they did not have money to buy bread they asked the people who worked at the white families to lend them some money. I have never borrowed money from people, because I had apricot and peach, and if I put the crop as collateral the banks would lend me the money. When I did not have money for the electricity or water I borrowed money from the bank, but at crop time I paid them back. Then they would lend me the money again. If we manage the business smartly we would not have difficulties. When I put the crop as security the bank lend me money for picking grape in advance.

Q: Didn't rabbits damage the grape?

A: We do not have to worry about rabbits when the tree becomes big, but when we plant the cuttings the rabbits eat the sprouts. Once the rabbits start eating them they keep on eating them until they are withered. Therefore, when we start planting the cuttings we put brown paper bags with bottoms cut off over the cuttings.The rabbits do not bother the cuttings as long as the bags are over them, so by the time the tree reaches the height of the bag, big branches will come out the following year even if the rabbits eat them. There were some drugs that repel rabbits, but the bags are best.

Q: Have you ever been rabbit hunting?

A: There are so many that we cannot catch all of them. When I had 160 acres I had 8 horses, and I used 4 horses at a time to plow the ground with a cultivator. In about a month after that the ground was covered with footprints of rabbits. They sleep in the daytime and run around at night time.

The white people used to have rabbit hunting. They posted bills to anounce the day they hunt the rabbits from a certain direction. They provided sandwich and coffee for those who helped. When we go there the people are already gathered. We stand side by side about 20 to 50 feet apart for miles. When we all advance forward yelling, the rabbits come out, so we chase them to the net and catch them. People who are in rabbit business ship the live rabbits or kill them and ship the rabbit meat to markets in San Francisco. They must make good money for they gave us free coffee and sandwiches. It was fun. I did that for 4 or 5 years.

Q: Did you hunt the rabbits by yourself?

A: I only hunt them with a rifle.

Q: Are they edible?

A: Yes, then can be eaten.

Q: What about jack rabbits?

A: They have a certain smell. The best tasting one are cotton-tails that live around the house. They taste almost as good as domestic rabbits. Rabbits taste the best when eaten 3 or 4 days after they are killed. They don't taste good right after they are killed. It is the same way with beef and pork. It is better to keep them in a cool place for 3 or 4 days.

T: That kind of thing must have been fun.

N: Life in America has some interesting things which we do not experience in Japan. Of course Japanese will be the happiest in Japan, but when we are in a foreign country we find their own kind of pleasure.

Q: What kind of hobbies do you have?

A: Fishing is my hobby. I went picking abalone and clams and fished perch. I went all the way to Monterey and Watsonville. I don't know how many times I went to Stockton to fish striped bass. I went fishing in San Francisco Bay about ten times, and I used to fish trout when I went to a hot spring. I like fishing very much. A man cannot live just by working. He has to have some hobby.

Q: Did you work 6 days a week when the grape was young?

A: If it was our own business we work on Sundays also when we are busy, but when we are not busy we are idle for a week to 10 days.

Q: Did the business get better after the depression?

A: It became better but just enough to make both ends meet. When the war broke out on December 7, 1941 I was fishing at Walnut Grove with a friend, and heard the news on the car radio. I said, "We haven't started fishing yet, so let's stay here for a couple of days and fish since we came all the way here." But my friend said, "I have to go to the bank and get some cash, for I am afraid we may not be able to get cash." I agreed with him, and we came back with shirts on the car windows so that the white people could not see us. Many white people were ~~were~~ noisy at the street corners looking at the extras. We arrived at Fresno around 11 p.m. As it was cold we wanted to stop and have a bowl of noodle, but all the restaurants were closed, so we came home. The next day I went to my bank but was told that the money was frozen by the order from the government.

Q: Couln't you get any money out?

A: Only little at a time.

Q: How was your relationship with the white people before the war?

A: It was not bad in our neighborhood. An influential American of German descent asked me what I would think if there is a war between Japan and America. I said it would be a very unfortunate thing and it would be very painful for me. As I am a Japanese I do not wish Japan to lose the war. Yet, I do not want America to lose the war either because I have been living here about 50 years and spent over half of my life here. America is my second mother country, so I wish meither Japan nor America to lose the war, but wish they stop the war by negotiation. Then this man said, "Japanese do not tell the truth. You are Japanese so you must want Japan to win the war."

Q: What was the opinion of this German?

A: He was a German descent but was born in America. One day when I went to a bank in Caruthers after coming home from the camp, a white man stopped me in front of the bank and asked me if I was a Japanese. He said he was a German. He said we were in a bad war but don't be discouraged because Germany and Japan will be stronger than before in 20 years. He said that on the sidewalk in front of all the people who were waiting for the bank to open. We won't say such thing in front of the white people, but he didn't care.

Q: Did any white people use violence on Japanese around here after the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: Mrs. Masada's house here was shot at after they came home from the camp, but nobody was hurt. A salesman in a grocery store in Caruthers did not attend a Japanese customer. Later the manager of the store came and apologized him for the behavior of the salesman. When I came back here after the war my house was not vacant, so I stayed at the Japanese Hall in Fresno with Mr. Koda's brother who was an engineer. One day I took him with me in my car to visit a friend. We could not find the house so I went into a restaurant and asked a waiter in a very polite way if he knew where a Japanese man named Mr. Kajioka lived. He answered, "I don't know such an animal." It was no use quarrelling with him as there were many white people, so I said, "Thank you just the same." and left. If we don't do anything, nothing happens. Some Americans said they were glad to see us back.

- Side 3

Q: When did you find out that you had to go to a camp?

A: After the war broke out there was an order that we could not go over 5 miles from here unless we had a special permit such as going to doctors. Some people went out secretly.

Q: How did you find out that you had to go to a camp?

A: At Buddhist and Christian church meetings the Japanese Association told some important people in Japanese society that the American government was going to put Japanese in relocation camps, so they should get ready and sell or lease the land to the white people.

I lease my ranch to a white man in the neighborhood. A year later he wrote me a letter asking me to raise his share to 80%. I asked a white lawyer who was taking care of my affairs to change the tenant for me. This time the tenant was a pastor's son and a Norwegian. He was an honest man.

Q: Where did you evacuate first?

A: At first we went to the Fairground in Fresno. Then we went to Jerome, Arkansas.

Q: How long did you stay at the Fairground?

A: We went there in May 1942, and stayed there for about 5 months. In October we went to Arkansas by a train. It did not run on the main route as it was used for transporting the soldiers, so it took about 5 days to get there.

Q: How did you feel when you entered the assembly center?

A: I was not afraid from the beginning.

T: Some people were afraid that they might be killed.

N: I heard that some people were so worried that they could not sleep at night, but I didn't think that way. We could order things from outside if we wanted, and the food was not bad. Only when the M.P.s were patrolling near the fence with rifles it looked like a prisoner of war camp, but the treatment in the camp was not bad.

Q: How were the rooms in the assembly center?

A: It was crude.The floor was made of wide coarse planks nailed together. As the barracks were built in a hurry, lumber made of green wood was used, so when they were dried they shrunk. Then alfalfa started growing through the openings in the floor. It was not a decent life, but I thought I had to bear it as war was going on.

Q: Were you disappointed?

A: I thought if Japanese were not evacuated, Japanese might have been killed here and there. As a matter of fact, a man named Mr. Asai who owned a garage in Stockton was shot at from across the street when he opened the garage door. and died immediately. It was after the war broke out, so the police did nothing for killing an enemy national. If Japanese were not put in camps many such cases might have happened. People like Americans who eat meat as staple food have brutal nature. On the other hand, people who eat rice and vegetables like Japanese are generally gentle. The fact that they put us in camps might have violated the human rights, but in a sense we are alive because we were put in camps.

Q: Were there any troubles as Japanese were crowded in a small place?

A: There were some troubles, but in general Japanese got along well. Sometimes people became such good friends that selfish and had quarrels. Some Niseis were beaten up by some Isseis who thought the Niseis browned-nosed the office and said things against them.

Q: How was Jerome?

A: It was good. At first MPs used to watch us from a tower, but as Japanese did nothing bad they quit going up on the tower. I used to go under the bob-wire fence which was under the watch tower and went outside to fish without permission. Looking back at the life in the camp I think we had fun. We used to go to the hills and picked up knot on the trees and made all kinds of things. Japanese are very skillful with fingers.

Q: Did you work in the camp?

A: I worked as a carpenter. I built this house.

Q: Did you design it yourself?

A: I made the blue print, figured how much lumber to use and everything else. I only hired a mason to lay bricks, and I did did all the carpentry work.

Q: Did you learn the carpentry from your father?

A: My father was skillful, too, so he built the house we lived in before.

Q: What did you do with this house when you went to the assembly center?

A: I built this house after the war.

Q: What did you do with the old house?

A: Mexican laborers lived there.

Q: Did you leave your furnitures?

A: Yes, I left everything. There was a limit in how much money we could take. We could not take such thing as flashlight, knives and shortwave radios. Later we could have flashlights. We were not allowed to have shortwave radios, but I secretly put antenas under the eaves and listened to the news from N.H.K. (Japan Broadcasting Association). I listened to the news, and by 6 AmM. the same news were repeated about 4 times. I wrote down the main points of the news by my own shorthand, and then rewrote it and announced it to everybody about 10 o'clock in the morning. People were glad to hear them.

Q: What kind of news were they?

A: About the news of the war. The battle in the Pacific, Philippines and so forth. I had about a full page news every day. I have them somewhere.

Q: Did you keep them?

A: I bound them like a book. Everybody came to listen to me bringing papaers with them.

Q: Were the information true?

A: Half of it was true, but half was not.

Q: Did you know that the informations were not true?

A: When Mitsui and Mitsubishi Heavy Industry companies sabotaged in building airplanes, and did not get them in time the military ordered, I thought they had given up hopes of winning. Gradually the news became worse, but when I told them that some people said, "Nakashima's broadcast is false, so let's beat him up."The situation became so bad that people didn't believe me, so I quit before the Emperor's braodcast.

Q: Did you listen to the Emperor's broadcast?

A: No, I didn't. If I heard it I had to tell them, so I didn't listen to it. I continued it almost till the end of the war.

T: That record is a treasure, you should keep it.

N: I don't know where it went to.

Q: What kind of hobbies did you have in the camp?

A: I liked carpentry work, so I made all kinds of things with knots of trees, or made small chest of drawers. I like anything.

Q: Weren't there many snakes in Jerome?

A: There were rattlesnakes and water moccasins which were very poisonous. The most poisonous snake was copperhead which had a diamond-shaped head, and big bright marks all over the body.

[illegible] copperhead is fat[illegible].

The snake bite by copperhead is fatal. I used to see them when I went fishing. Some people caught hundreds of snakes and putting them in cages held exhibitions. Most rattlesnakes have 5 to 6 bells, but some of them have 10 bells or more. They are over 10 years old and their bodies are about 2 inches in diameter. Some Japanese are clever. They put string on sticks and make loops with the string at the end of sticks. They put the sticks by the snakes and when the snake put their heads in the loops they pull the string and catch the snakes by the necks. It is easy to catch them alive. At one time I ate a water moccasin. It was good. Rattlesnakes are good, too.

Q: How do you eat them?

A: We broil them with soy sauce and sugar. They are really good. We can chew them for ten minutes and they are still very tasty. If you eat them too much you cannot sleep well at night. I used to catch water moccasins for some people who were weak with T.B. After I moved to the camp in Arizona I used to go to the hills early in the morning and find the snakes coiled under discarded cardboard boxed. When it is cold the snakes are not very active, so I put a half gallon jar by the snakes and with a stick push the snake in the jar.

Q: What kind of fish could you catch in Arkansas?

A: I caught eels, fish called baffalo which looks like sea bass, perch and gar fish.

Q: Did you have fun in the camp?

A: Americans were generous. We could go out shopping twice or three times a month if we get the permit. I used to go fishing twice a month with permit, but that was not enough so I used to go out fishing secretly. There were black people's houses outside. The blacks were friendly towards Japanese. In toilets there were signs, "Whites only" and the black people could not go to the white people's toilets. On the buses also there were signs that says the white people sit in the fromt and the black people sit in the rear. The blacks comply with it and sit in the rear.

Q: Where did Japanese sit?

A: On the white side. Japanese are just as intelligent and well educated as the white people, so we were treated equally.

Q: Did you get along well with Americans while you were in the camp?

A: Yes, it went on smoothly.

Q: Were there any troubles?

A: No, there were not much touble. Only when some Japanese who did not like to be controlled by Americans started a strike. They were fired from the jobs. That's about all and no other troubles.

Q: How many years did you stay in Jerome?

A: About 2 years.

Q: Where did you go from there?

A: Gila, Arizona.

Q: How was Arizona?

A: Arizona was a hot place.

Q: Why did you go to Gila?

A: There were 12 relocation camps and also concentration camps which had people who were connected with politics, intellectuals, priests and officers of the Japanese Associations. Each relocation camp had about 4,800 to 5,000 Japanese. As the war prolonged, Japanese were allowed to go out to work. America was short on laborers in industries and agriculture as young men went into military service, so the government wanted Japanse to work. Only the Pacific coast was in the defence area, but from east of Nevada was not. As there were not many Japanese in the East, the white people hardly have any anti-Japanese sentiment. The white people in the East were kinder than those in California. There were intermarriage of Americans and Japanese since the time I came here 60 years ago.

K: In California the intermarriage was prohibited by law.

N: Yes, only recently that kind of law was nulified.

Q: Were there any Jpanese who married the whites in those days?

A: There were a few.

Q: Were they persecuted?

A: No, they were not. Even if it was prohibited by law they could go to other state and get married.

Q: Was Jerome closed?

A: While we were in the camp the American government encouraged Japanese to go out from the camp and work outside. Many Niseis left. As people left, it cost too much expense to operate the camp so they put some camps together. That is why we moved to another camp.

Q: How long did you stay in Gila?

A: Till the war ended. I was working as a carpenter, so I made boxes and trunks for people who were going out. As the number of people decreased I was asked to become a block manager, but I declined so they told me to leave the camp within 2 days. I was not ready to leave, so I went to the chief of the camp to negotiate, but to no avail. I had only two days to pack and leave the camp, but I spent one day going to the office. People felt sorry for me, and helped me pack and mark the packages all night long. I packed walking canes made from giant cactus and other things I made and the materials in boxes.

Q: Did you bring back the giant cactus?

A: I didn't bring a big one, but this is a small one. I made walking cane out of these. As I was doing the radio broadcasting I didn't have much time to make these things.

Q: Did you do the broadcasting in Jerome?

A: I did it in Jerome, and also in Gila.

Q: How did you get hold of the shortwave radio?

A: I went outside and bought it. Japanese don't do anything bad, so they didn't say anything for listening to the shortwave radio. I used to broadcast next to the police station everyday. The policeman used to listen to it, too. When the policeman thought the office was going to complain about it, he notified me.

Q: Was the policeman a Japanese?

A: Yes, he was. I used to broadcast next to the police station everyday. It was fun.

Q: Do you have any recollections of the camp?

A: We cannot have that kind of life again. We had the security of living, and received some spending money. We didn't have chance to spend much money. People who liked to drink had to go out and buy whiskey so they needed much money. Some people made sake from rice secretly. Most people received $16, and boss and doctors and those who did dirty work received $19.

Q: Wasn't your house vacant when you came back?

A: No, I stayed at a Japanese hall for about 2 months.

Q: What hall was it?

A: It was a Japanese hall built by Japanese who lived at Mammoth.

Q: Where did you put the things you brought from the camp?

A: I put them in my house. The person who leased my ranch was a quiet man. His father was a pastor in Norway. But the people who were hired by him were Okies, and they didn't want Japanese to live there while they were working . He asked me to live somewhere else, so I lived in the Japanese hall for about 2 months.

Q: Did they leave?

A: They left when the work was done.

Q: What month did you come back to your house?

A: I think it was close to the New Year.

Q: Was your ranch well taken care of?

A: Some people had their ranch damaged, but mine was not. He was getting 70% of the crop, so he had much profit.

Q: Did your lawyer take good care of your property?

A: Yes, he did.

Q: Did you remarry?

A: I was a widower in those days. When I went to the camps I took my parents with me.

Q: Did you remarry after you came back?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: When did you remarry?

A: About 5 years after I came back. My mother died around the time I built this house. I was living here with my father and two sons. Then I went back to Japan to take a wife.

Q: What schools did your sons go to?

A: My oldest son wass attending a highschool in Caruthers when he went to the camp, and graduated from high school in camp. Then both sons enlisted in the service. Some people did not want their sons to go into service and die, so they professed themselves disloyal to America and went to Tule Lake. I believed those who were born in America are Americans, so it is not right to avoid going to war because they do not want to die. I let my two sons join the service because I thought they should as they are Americans. My oldest son left a little earlier. At New York he caught chickenpox and was put in an isolation hospital for 3 weeks. After he got well and was ready to go aboard the ship he started having a toothache and it took another 3 weeks. Some soldiers who went into service with him died in Europe. When he finally crossed the Atlantic Ocean and ~~was~~ almost reached Europe ~~when~~ the war was over, so he was stationed in Germany as a member of the occupation force.

Q: What did he do after he came home?

A: He became a farmer.

Q: Did both sons become farmers?

A: Yes. During the depression I reduced the ranch to 80 acres, but after our sons married we increased the acreage. My second son owns 80 acres, and the oldest son and I own 200 acres.

Q: Are you still working?

A: No, I retired 5 or 6 years ago.

Q: What do you enjoy doing now?

A: The average age of Japanese man now is around 70, and woman is around 75. My friends are almost all gone, and only the widows are left, so I don't have anybody to visit and I am lonesome. I go fishing, write poems or read new books. I pull weeds around the house but I hardly help with ranch work any more.

Q: Did you have difficulties in starting to farm all over again after you came home?

A: I was getting 30% share of the crop, so by the time I came home it paid off the mortgage. Since then the business was good, so I increased the acreage.

Q: What was the religion of your family?

A: It was Buddhism, but I never went to temple. I have many Christian friends. Some Seventh Day Adventist pastor used to visit me.

Q: Do you remember anything that you learned from your parents?

A: I learned many little things.

Q: What kind of things were helpful to you?

A: They were not like things students learn from teachers at school. Through the character and conversation with my father I found out that he was a sensible, great man, and I respected him. He studied Seicho-No-Iye before he died.

Q: As an Issei what kind of things do you want to teach Sanseis?

A: I want them to have pride as Japanese-Americans. If they don't have pride they will be like Mexicans who try to steal things from the employer.if they have a chance, and think they will not be guilty if they return the things when they are caught stealing. I don't want them to have such chep ideas. I want them to have a pride that Japanese are fine people with few crimes, and although the skin is darker, they are not inferior to the white people. In Niseis time there were few crimes, but the statistics show that crimes has been increasing among Sanseis and Yonseis in Los Angeles and San Francisco. This is because they forgot the pride as Japanese-Americans and just immitate the white people in everything. They think that the crimes among the Blacks and the Mexicans is nothing strange. If they do not have the pride they might end up in big crimes as Japanese are intelligent. I think it is good that Sanseis are Americanized and going into the society without fear, but at the same time their crime rate is going up.

T: The awareness as Japanese is increasing among Sanseis.

N: Yes. I am very impressed by Kimochi-Kai by Sanseis in San Francisco. I think the Sanseis in the country are slow in rising.

T: There is one in Sacramento, also. Isseis who can come out are enjoying it.

N: It seems like many Sanseis are studying Japanese in San Francisco, but in the country Sanseis do not like to go to Japanese Language schools, so in some districts the schools have financial difficulties. I think the Niseis have to be firmer. In this age of air transportation foreign countries are as close as neighbors. In Europe the countries are adjoined [illegible], and people can go shopping to other countries, so the merchants have to know more than 3 languages. The whole world is going to be like that now that airplanes shorten the distances. When the jobless rate becomes high and the jobs are hard to find, Japanese-Americans may have special opportunities to get jobs as interpreter, and in business and import and export just because they can read and write Japanese. If they say they don't like to learn Japanese, and English is enough, the society will become small. I would like to make Sanseis understand this.

T: Going back to the olden days, I haard that many Isseis died from heat in Fresno.

N: No, only a few people died from heat.

Q: Did any people die from working too hard?

A: It is out of question.

Q: Is it true that it was hot?

A: Yes, it was hot for sure.

Q: Were the wages good?

A: It was pretty good.

Q: Were there piece work?

A: There ere piece work, and work paid by hours. Fresno county had the highest income among all the counties in America. That is why people could make a living. That people died of heat was an exaggerated expression by some people who lived in a cool and foggy climate like San Francisco. Of course some people suffered malaria, but they did not die from it.

Q: When was the hardest time in your life?

A: During the depression my wife died leaving twins, a boy and a girl. I had to leave them with a White nurse for 3 months for $30 a month until my parents came here. One of the twins caught cold about a week after my parents came here, and died of pnumonia.

Q: Was it a girl?

A: Yes, it was a girl.

Q: Was he the only son?

A: He was the second son. I had the oldest son. Neither of them knew their mother. They were brought up by their grandmother. In those days I had 160 acres and had a lot of work but could not hire poeple, My wife died leaving the babies, and I had to pay $60 a month to the nurse, so it was very hard.

Q: Were you a member of the Japanese Association?

A: Japanese men had to submit petition for the military deferment every year. The secretary of the Japanese Association took care of it and sent it to the Japanese consul, who sent it to the Foreign Ministry and the military. When I went back to Japan to take a wife I took the physical examination for draft but did not pass.

Q: Did you go back to Japan when you remarried?

A: Yes, I went back to Japan and stayed there for a year.

Q: Did someone introduce her to you?

A: My youngest brother was there when I remarried.

Q: Do you think about your past often?

A: I still remember about the time I came here, about my highschool days and grammar school days. That was long time ago.

Q: Did you have difficulties with English after you came here?

A: My English is broken English. I did not know professional words, so before I went to lawyer's or doctor's I looked up the words I wanted to say in the dictionary and memorized them. When I went there and talked I was surprised I used such English, but after I got through I forgot them. It was not like that when I was in highschool. I used to get 100 points in English. As I was coming to America I did not study other subjects well. Now I think I should have studied them more seriously.

Q: Did you understand English well when you came here?

A: I could not make myself understood well because I learned English with British accent in Japan. I can understand British people better than Americans, especially Californians.

Q: Were there gambling houses in Fresno?

A: There were many Chinese gambling houses in Fresno. They had ties with the police. Before the police raided the gambling houses they told them in advance when they were going to raid them, and they received bribes.

Q: Did many Japanese go there?

A: Old Isseis who went around camps spent all the money they earned by gambling. Japanese who bought some land and farmed were successful people. Those who did not have will to buy land used to

go gambling saying,"I had a good dream last night, so I am going to win today." I think Japanese spent several hundred million dollars on gambling in Fresno since they first came here.

Q: Was about 50% of Isseis like that?

A: Yes, about half of them were like that. When I first came here 75% of Japanese were farm laborers. There were some who were serious and saved money, but most of them spent money in gambling. When they went to gambling houses in the morning, Chinese gave them bowls of rice porridge. Japanese Isseis spent enormous amount of money at Chinese gambling houses.

Q: Were there Japanese restaurants and brothels?

A: Yes, there were many.

Q: Was it because there were many sigle men?

A: Yes, that is why brothels prospered. When men won in gambling they bought their friends drinks. Even serious men tried to see what it was like to gamble as their friends told them it was fun. If they go there and lose they would give up, but usually they won, and then they found it was fun. When new customers came Chinese let them win.

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